

# Staff Manual and Summer Survival Guide





**Welcome !**

**We are sure you will find this summer to be a combination of fun, frustration, excitement and challenges.**



**HANOVER COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
*Dedicated to the quality of life in Hanover*



### **Vision Statement**

Hanover - where a family of communities, inspired by its people, traditions, spirit and history, is the foundation for its future.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Hanover government is to provide a quality of life that is defined, encouraged and supported by the community itself - where government focuses efficiently and effectively on the general well-being, education and safety of the people, where service delivery is based on sound financial practices, and where growth is managed in creative and innovative ways.

Hanover County Parks and Recreation offers many recreational activities ranging from classes such as Zumba and Young Rembrandts drawing courses, to special events such as the Hanover Tomato Festival and Taylor Events to programs for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Additionally, the department sponsors athletic leagues, develops and maintains parks including Pole Green Park, Courthouse Park, Poor Farm Park, Montpelier Park and Hanover Wayside Park, as well as operate summer camps including Summer Sneakers, MEGA Middle and Discover Camps.




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## MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Hanover County Parks and Recreation Department to promote, advocate, and provide the highest quality park and recreational resources and leisure services.

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## Programs:

Hanover County Parks and Recreation offers the following type of full-day camps:

**Summer Sneakers** - a day camp program for children who have at least completed Kindergarten through rising 6th graders. This program runs Mondays-Thursdays 8am-4:30pm.

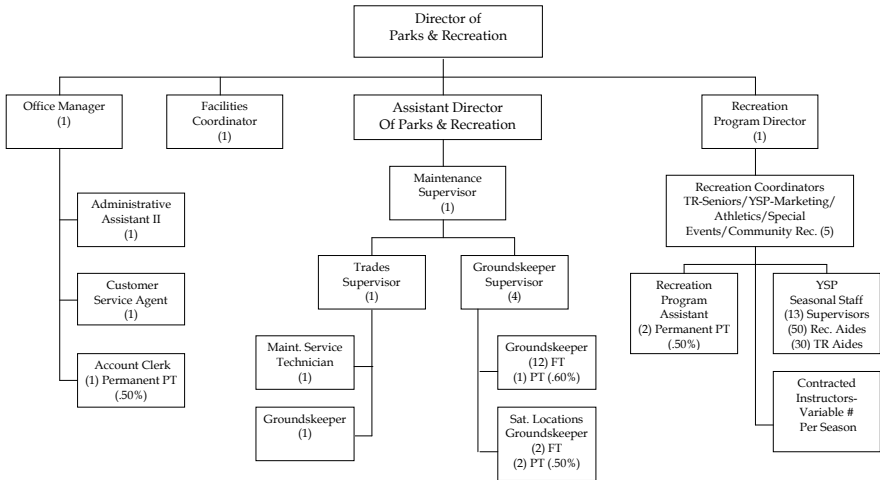
**MEGA Middle** - a day camp program for youth who will be entering grades 6-8 in the fall. This program runs Mondays-Thursday 8am-4:30pm.

**Discover Camps** - These camps are built around a specific theme. These single-week camps run Monday - Friday 8am-5pm. These camps include: Discover Play, Discover Arts in Motion, Discover Create, Discover Science, Discover Animals and Discover Adventure.

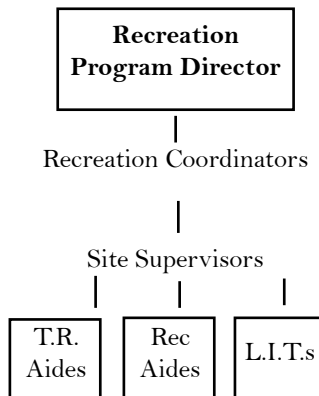




## PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## SUMMER CAMP STAFF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# Who are the staff at Parks and Rec Summer Camps?



As the job is a seasonal one, the majority of our summer staff members are

school teachers  
college students  
high school students.

**Ideally the trait that all the staff have in common is an interest in working with children.**

Each site has a site supervisor and rec aides. Some sites may also have Therapeutic Recreation Aides and L.I.T.s (Leaders in Training).





# Recreation Aides

**Recreation Aides** make up the largest group of staff members in the summer program. Their impact on the children of the program is incredible.

The Rec. Aide's job responsibilities include:

- leading large and small group activities
- enforcing program rules and regulations
- developing program ideas and activities
- participating in child development by presenting a positive role model as leader and team member
- providing effective communication with site supervisor
- supporting/mentoring Leaders-in-Training

Generally there will be one rec aide per 25 children enrolled at each site.

The success of the program often comes down to the rec. aides and their ability to safely and enthusiastically lead groups of children in fun activities.







## **Leaders-in-Training (L.I.T.s)**

L.I.T.s (Leaders-in-Training) are high school students who volunteer their time to help the children have a fun experience at the Youth Summer Program.

L.I.T.s serve as assistants and are partnered with recreation aides to plan, lead and implement program activities.

Many L.I.T.s attended the camp program as a child and now want to give back to their community by helping with this fun program. Many L.I.T.s often have the easiest time relating to the kids as they are closest to their age.

L.I.T.s should not however, be given the responsibility of leading a group alone without the help or support of another staff member.

While many L.I.T.s may eventually work Summer Sneakers or Discover Camps as a Recreation Aide, please know that experience as an L.I.T. will be helpful, but does not guarantee that the L.I.T. will be hired as a Rec Aide in the future.

# Therapeutic Recreation Aides (TR Aides)

Depending on the number of children who have special needs at your site, there may be one or more **Therapeutic Recreation Aides** at your site as well. These individuals work closely with children with special needs to help them get the most out of the summer program. The job duties of the TR Aides include:

- helping children with disabilities get involved with camp programs and activities
- using various behavior management techniques to motivate appropriate behavior
- serving as communicator with parents to give parents accurate description of child's experience at camp
- explaining game and activity rules in the most appropriate way for child to understand
- making modifications to camp activities to allow the child to participate in the most independent way possible.

When the TR Aide's child is not in attendance, the TR Aide may work as a Recreation Aide or other role as designated by Site Supervisor or Recreation Coordinator.

All staff are encouraged and expected to interact with children with disabilities, but the TR Aide working with the child may have the most insight into what style of interaction works best.



# Site Supervisor

At each site, there is one individual who is the **Site Supervisor**. This individual oversees the entire operation of his/her program site.



Their job duties include:

- staff supervision and evaluation
- establishing and maintaining proper relations with parents
- supporting the staff in child development and proper discipline guidelines
- documentation responsibilities
- field trip and activity schedule coordination
- communicating with school and Parks and Recreation personnel

This person will be your direct supervisor at your program site.

Your help in keeping the site supervisor informed of participant and staff needs is critical to the success of the program.

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In addition to the staff at your site, Hanover County Parks and Recreation also employs a full-time, year-round team of recreation professionals including a **Recreation Program Director, Recreation Coordinators and Recreation Program Assistants**. These individuals will be working closely with you and your Site Supervisor to help ensure that the program runs well.

# Staff Expectations

Additional information will be reviewed during training

**Conduct.** As a summer staff member, children and youth attending the summer program will look up to you. You are expected to set a good, **positive example** and **role model** for these participants. In addition, you are a direct representative of the department and Hanover County. You are expected to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner at all times while you are at work.

**Tobacco.** Smoking, chewing or any other use of **tobacco is not permitted** at any of the program sites, on school property, during program hours or on field trips.

**Dress Code.** Staff members will be given several Hanover County **Parks and Recreation T-shirts** to wear during the program. Staff are not permitted to modify their staff shirt (i.e. cut off sleeves, roll up sleeves etc.). Staff are required to wear a Parks and Rec. T-shirt each day. Staff are permitted to wear shorts, but **shorts must be of appropriate length**. Staff should present a neat, clean and professional appearance. Staff members must wear closed-toe shoes, preferably tennis shoes.

Check with your school officials or with the school dress code also regarding things such as wearing hats indoors, wearing hats backwards, wearing bandanas, etc. Some schools are very particular on these clothing items.

**Tips-Gratuities.** Employees of the county are not permitted to accept tips or other gratuities from parents or other individuals.

**Appropriate Language.** Employees are expected to use clean and **appropriate language at all times**. Cursing or profanity is not permitted. Your conversation with campers and fellow staff members should be "G" rated.

**Performance Reviews.** During the summer, each staff member will receive a final evaluation or performance review from his/her site supervisor. This information sharing process is designed to provide constructive feedback on your performance in order to provide the best possible program to the children of Hanover County. Performance reviews are also a factor in deciding whether or not a staff member is guaranteed their position the following summer. Additionally near the mid-point of camp, you will get a chance to meet informally with your supervisor to discuss your performance so far.

**Alcohol.** The Youth Summer Program is a drug-free, alcohol-free work place.



**Timeliness.** Staff members are expected to **be on-time** each day for work. If you are running late, notify your supervisor. Staff with tardiness issues may be given a counseling form. (i.e. arriving at 7:46am instead of the expected 7:45am means that you are late).

**Cell Phone Use.** Both campers and staff members are **prohibited from using their personal cell phone** during the camp day unless approved by supervisor. Your best bet is to leave your cell phone in your car, so you won't be tempted to use it. Your site supervisor will be given a county-issued cell phone for business use.

**Stay on Camp Grounds.** All summer staff members are expected to **stay at the school site** throughout each day (except for scheduled field trips. Trips to McDonald's or other places (even if they are close by) are not permitted.

**Personal medications.** Staff members are asked to leave their personal medications locked in their car to help prevent any child from taking their medications. If certain medications must be brought into the program site (inhaler, etc.) they should be kept in secured locations.

**Time-off.** Time is off granted during the Youth Summer Program ONLY with prior approval. This is to ensure that we have the appropriate number of staff members to safely meet the needs of the participants. If an illness or emergency arises contact your Site Supervisor and Recreation Coordinator immediately.

**Meals.** Staff members should **bring their own lunch and snacks** as there is no food service provided in the summer at the program sites. Staff are not permitted to leave camp to go pick up lunch. Please remember there are no refrigerators at camp, so you may want to bring your lunch in a cooler/insulated lunch bag. As campers are not permitted to use school microwaves, staff should refrain from this as well.

**Gifts to participants.**

Due to the favoritism that it may convey, staff members are not permitted to buy ice cream or pay for other items for children attending the program.

**Communication with parents.** All staff members should **greet parents and children to make them feel welcomed** to camp. Supervisors and Therapeutic Recreation Aides however should be the only staff members to speak with parents alone regarding camper behavior or other significant issues. Recreation Aides may be asked to relay information to parents under the supervision of the site supervisor.

**Valuables.** As camp is a very communal place and children may be tempted to use other's belongings, please **leave your valuables at home.**

**Staff Training.** Prior to the first day of camp, all staff and volunteers are expected to actively participate in (not just attend) staff training. A lot of helpful information is reviewed during this time, so please stay engaged and focused.

**Appropriate Touch.** Careful judgement should be used when there is any physical contact between campers and staff. While physical contact should be kept to a minimum, things such as “high fives” may be appropriate. **Campers should not sit on laps, give or be given back rubs, etc.** The same standard should be used between staff members too.

**Vehicles & Transportation.** **Staff members are not permitted to give participants rides to or from the program site** unless he/she is an immediate family member. Staff members should not leave the program area during camp time to go to their vehicles.

**Payment of Salaries.** Pay days are the 15<sup>th</sup> and last day of each month. Your first payday will be **July 15<sup>th</sup>**. This pay check will be for dates you worked June 16<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, as the county pays two weeks in arrears. All employees must have direct deposit.

**Counseling/Disciplinary Actions.** Staff members who demonstrate inappropriate or poor work habits may be given a counseling notice. Repeated poor job performance or violation of program policies and procedures can lead to dismissal from position.

**Projecting Positive Attitude.** Even when you are tired, staff are expected to **project a positive attitude**. When a staff member appears lazy or disinterested, it can ruin the morale at camp for both staff and campers.

**Social Media.** Many staff members may be using Facebook when they are at home. Please know that many parents (and kids) will also likely look YOU up by name on Facebook, Pinterest, etc. Please think about this when information is posted on Facebook. Keeping your settings to “Friends Only” instead of “Public” is also advised. Additionally, it may not be wise to “friend” any of the children attending the program who may also be on Facebook.

**Mandated Reporter.** Mandated Reporting laws require that professionals who deal with children report suspicious circumstances suggestive of child maltreatment to child protective services. In addition to requiring professionals to report, the laws generally outline penalties for failure to report.

# What should I do...

Additional information will be reviewed during training of what to do.

## **...if there is severe weather?**

Notify your Site Supervisor, if he/she is unaware. Seek shelter in safe area. If a severe storm hits, your site may lose power. Be prepared. Know where to find flashlights, where to meet, etc. During your day of unpacking materials at your site (during staff training), you should learn the emergency meeting areas as well as think of activities that you can lead to keep children occupied/distracted during storm.

## **...if there is a fire?**

Get children and other staff to safe area. Pull fire alarm. Contain fire if possible. Notify supervisor. Focus your energies on keeping everyone together and calm at a safe distance from the fire. During your day of unpacking program materials at your site, you should review your site's emergency evacuation routes.

## **...if a child gets hurt?**

Typically it is best to not move a seriously injured child unless they are in immediate danger. You may be able to move the child though if it is a more minor injury such as a mild cut or scrape. Each site has a first aid kit. Notify supervisor. Apply appropriate first aid. If there are other children around, you may need to divert their attention by having someone lead them in another activity.

Your Site Supervisor will likely ask you to write up an incident report so that he/she can have a full understanding of what caused the incident. Typically the supervisor will be the one to explain what happened to the child's parents.

**...if I am running late to work or if I am sick?** Be sure to call your site supervisor. TR Aides and Supervisors also need to call their Recreation Coordinator. Failure to call may result in unexcused absence or tardiness.

**...if a parent complains to me about the program?** Please refer them directly to your Site Supervisor. The parent and the supervisor may ask you to stay for the conversation, but communicating with parents is primarily a supervisor responsibility.

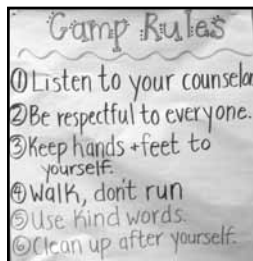
**...if a child gets sick?** Let your supervisor know immediately. Your supervisor will likely call the parent to inform them of the child's health. We are not permitted to dispense any medication to a child (except for a child's regular medication which the site supervisor will handle).

**...I suspect child abuse?** Child abuse is a serious issue that will be discussed during staff training. Also, of course talk to your supervisor. He or she will provide direction on what to do next.

# Tips on Working with Children & Youth:

## Set Expectations.

Together with the campers, create a short list of expectations that you want the campers to live up to. State the rules in a positive way to describe what you want to see (not what you don't want to see). Also, demonstrate or model the rules to your campers. If they see you following the rules, they will be more likely to follow them too. Post these rules so all can be reminded of your expectations.



## Start out firm.

Set your expectations high at the start of camp. It is better to start out more strict and loosen up after you get to know the group. This doesn't mean you have to be mean or nasty, but if you don't enforce a rule at the beginning of camp, it is a huge challenge to get children to follow that rule later in the summer.

## Save the Yelling.

If you're not careful, some campers' annoying behaviors will turn you into a screaming machine. Yelling soaks up a lot of energy and is not particularly effective.



Save the yelling for cheering or if there is an important safety issue. Your efforts to create a positive relationship with the campers by using humor and respect will allow you to convey your message with a quick look or short reminder.

Also remember the age of the kids. What you think is just raising your voice can seem like yelling to an 8 year-old.

## Earn Their Respect.

Campers won't simply follow your instructions because you are wearing a blue staff shirt or because you are older than they are. You must give them a reason to listen. Showing that you care is a great way to build a relationship and earn their respect. Learning the children's names and interests as well interacting with the children more than the other staff are important steps in gaining respect.



## **Be Specific.**

When giving praise or criticism, be specific in your descriptions. Describe or label the action that you liked (or didn't like) seeing. "I liked when you shared the ball with Madison," is often easier understood by a child than "You were good in the gym today." Remember "*Specific is terrific.*"



## **Avoid sarcasm.**

Many of us know (or actually are) people who use sarcasm to great effect. These individuals are hilarious and can make a room full of people roll on the floor with laughter. Sarcasm with adults is often successful. Sarcasm with children and middle-schoolers though, is often less effective.

Many children will take sarcastic comments personally (and be too embarrassed to say anything). This includes your attempts at humor by calling an uncoordinated child "Hey, come here, Clutzy" or an overweight child "Hey, come here, Tubby." Others will often follow your lead and be sarcastic with their peers, but instead of coming off as funny, they can appear negative and mean-spirited.

## **Learn from others.**

Chances are good that there are people on your staff who have the natural gift of working with children. The kids seem to listen to their every instruction. We all can improve our own skills by watching and observing other successful interactions with children.



## **Don't play favorites.**

It is natural to have some favorite children in camp. The important thing is not to show it. When a staff member shows favoritism to a child (by letting them break the rules, etc.), it can undermine the authority of other staff members.

## **Make smooth transitions.**

Give the campers verbal and visual cues of when an activity is coming to a close. Let them know what is coming next. A good practice may be to start giving "warnings" at about 10 minutes before the end of your session. "Okay, guys, we've got 10 minutes left. Try to finish up your project and then get ready to clean-up for lunch."



## **Use praise.**

It's easy to see when kids are acting up. It can be more of a challenge to catch them being good. When they are doing what you want, give them praise and positive reinforcement.

## **Remember kids are still learning social skills**

### **(and it's our job to help teach them).**

Children don't come to the program with a full toolbox of skills needed to get along with others. It is our duty as adults to teach them the correct way to interact with peers. Believe it or not, you will likely learn new skills including increased patience and improved communication by working with youth.



## **Get on eye level.**

Kneel down, crouch over or sit. Meet campers at their level. Looking campers in the eyes conveys interest, respect, care and honesty.

## **Choose your battles.**

Tolerate or ignore some undesired behavior. Too much attention to some annoying behaviors (even if it is negative attention) may cause the behavior to increase.

## **Camp is not school.**

With the focus of camp on recreation (and not classroom instruction), your role may be more of a leader than that of a teacher. It is subtle difference, but camp may offer kids more opportunities to interact in social situations.



## **Be consistent.**

All staff members should enforce the camp expectations consistently. If a child knows that a particular staff member is more lax in the rules, it can make it much more difficult for the others to enforce the same rule.

## **“In a moment, but not yet...”**

When explaining the basic concept of an activity to a large group of people, using a phrase similar to “In a moment but not yet” may help prevent you from losing control. For example, if you were to say “Today, we’re going to play kickball”, kids may begin to chatter, move around and plan their strategy. Before you know it, you are spending the next 3 to 5 minutes trying to get their attention back. If, however, you say “In a moment... but **not yet**, we are going to play kickball” it often helps kids stay focused a little bit longer so you can give out the rest of the details.



## **Give consequences logically.**

If a child fails to follow camp expectations, it is best to give related or natural consequences. For example, if a child fails to clean up after themselves at lunch, give them additional cafeteria/cleaning responsibilities. Writing 100 times “I will clean up my table after lunch” on the chalkboard like Bart Simpson does at the beginning of *The Simpsons* often has little value in teaching children what they are expected to do.

Corrective discipline should also be given in a timely manner, as well as in an appropriate location. Blaming and shaming a child in front of his peers is rarely effective.

## **Keep supervisor & parents informed.**

Your site supervisor will handle most of the interactions with parents, so be sure to keep up the communication with him/her so that they have a good picture of what is going on at camp. Making “secret deals” with campers (i.e. “If you clean up this area, I won’t tell your parents about your poor behavior today”) can be a dangerous tactic.



## **Don't expect the worst.**

Your approach and attitude can make a big difference in your success. If you come to camp with a negative attitude, you will likely always find a fault with a child's behavior. Expecting the worst often makes you jump to wrong conclusions. Look for the positive and encourage good behavior when you see it.

## **Be careful with group punishment.**

There is some value in peer pressure, but punishing the entire group of children for the behavior of only some can create breaks in your relationship with the campers that you have worked hard to establish. Children who were following directions may now view you as untrustworthy if they are being punished for the action of others. It is often worth the extra effort to focus any punishment only on the individuals responsible.

## **Watch your own stress level.**

Even the most patient of staff members will experience times when the children's requests and needs for attention are overwhelming. Use positive stress management techniques to help you deal with the responsibility of working with children.



## **Have fun.**

It is amazing the difference you can see in the kids just by how you approach them. Smiling, laughing and being approachable makes kids feel safe, relaxed and welcomed.



## **Remember that middle-schoolers are in a great stage of change.**

Aside from infancy, the time during middle school is the greatest growth period in a child's life. Bones are often growing faster than muscles. It's no wonder they are so often tired.

The part of the brain that controls reason and judgement is still underdeveloped at this stage. You may often hear them say things such as "It's not my fault" or "but I didn't do anything" as their brains have weak connection between actions and consequences.

You may expect them to act like adults, but they are still gaining those skills. Middle schoolers often still have an urge to cling to adults but don't want to show it. They even often enjoy still watching cartoons... when no one is looking.

Middle school is also a time for kids to re-invent themselves. They have a fun curiosity about them that allows them to try new things to see what "sticks." Skills learned in middle school often stay with them for ages.

Middle schoolers also often like being given responsibilities. It's a chance to feel more grown-up.



## **Develop reward system.**

Positive praise and recognition can go a long way in reinforcing positive behavior. Rewards can vary from a tangible prize to a special treat such as a game of their choice. Some people confuse rewards with bribes. If done properly, a reward is an incentive for good behavior.

## **Give individualized attention.**

Even if it is for a just a few minutes each day, give each of the campers in your group some individualized positive attention.

Ask the child how his day is going, what he did last night, etc. Don't lose sight of the individual camper experience. When a camper is given some individualized attention each day, he often gains more respect for you and listens better to your direction.



## **Use Kinesics.**

Kinesics is kind of a fancy term for body language. The more animated you are with gestures, clapping as well as facial expressions, the more likely the campers will want to listen to you.

People try to understand the words you say, but what we really absorb are the non-verbal cues and body language you convey.

## **Lead from up close.**

The nearer you are to the campers the better the chances you will catch their positive behaviors and praise them. Barking orders from a distance or while sitting down in a side conversation with another staff member often tells campers that you are not interested or don't care.

## **Use fewer words.**

You don't need to talk down to kids, but be concise in your instructions. Find out what the kids know about an activity by asking questions before you explain or talk too much.

## **Know your campers.**

Knowing the children you are working with can make your job much easier. Learning a child's personality, traits and habits can help you understand the child's motivation for certain behaviors and help you anticipate in which situations he/she might be inclined to act in a way contrary to your expectations.

In the final analysis, it will be your relationship with your campers that most directly impacts their behavior.

## **Have a "Quiet" sign.**

Whether it be the "Silent Coyote" sign (as demonstrated on the right) or simply asking the group "If you can hear my voice, clap once. If you can hear my voice, clap twice.." it is important to have a way to get the campers' attention quickly.



## **Once you have the group quiet...**

Peace and quiet at camp is a rare thing. Once you have the group quiet, make your camp announcements, but try to avoid engaging in side conversations with any one particular camper. If a camper asks a relevant question, be sure to repeat it so that all can hear. If the question is one that can wait, ask that they hold their question until after you have finished giving instructions.

## **Put Others Needs Ahead of Your Own**

If there is one trait that is common in most successful summer staff members, it is their ability to put the needs of others ahead of their own. During a time of free play, who gets your attention, one of your staff friends or one of the campers? Keeping the campers' needs as your primary focus is often the best way to have a successful summer. Of course during your off time, it is important that you meet your personal needs including getting ample rest.





## **Project Positive Attitude.**

Let's be honest. Sometimes doing some activities with kids can be tiring or even boring. If however you choose to show a positive attitude, the campers will have a better time, the staff around you will have a better time, and before you know you'll be having a better time.

## **Remember kids sometimes act their age.**

Don't over-react when a 2nd grader has not memorized your site's schedule of activities.

## **Learn campers' names.**

Learning names is an important step in building a relationship with the children. Calling a child by their name, rather than "Hey you, in the blue shirt" will show that you care about who they are.

Having the campers wear name tags during the first days of each session is also a great way to help everyone learn names.



You may also want to consider taking photos of all the staff persons at your site and post the photos on a bulletin board to help the campers and parents learn your names too.



## **Look at the floor.**

Using existing lines on the gym or classroom floor often helps children know where you want them to stand. “Stand single file behind the blue square” is often easier to understand and follow than “Stand over there.”

## **Turn off Walkie-Talkies at night.**

Try to remember to turn off the walkie talkies at the end of each day, so that the batteries will last longer.



## **Support your activity leader.**

When a fellow staff member is giving directions to a group of children, help him/her out by either assisting him in giving the kids the information or help keep the kids focused by re-directing their attention to the leader. Notice how the staff members above are focused on the kids. Avoid standing away from the kids and having a side conversation with another staff member.

## **Be Careful with Zero Tolerance Policies.**

We often preach about the importance of consistency, but there are times when a “one size fits all” solution to children’s behavior problems can create more problems. Using good common sense skills and thinking through alternatives and options is where everyone should be consistent.

## Watch your non-verbals.



Which of these people seem the most welcoming? Most people may say the person shown in the first photo appears the most welcoming.

If you want kids and parents to listen to you and respect you, you need to put forth the effort to project a positive attitude. This even applies on days or mornings when you are tired. Your facial expressions and body language really set the tone. Presenting a positive image to kids and parents (and even co-workers) will make for a much more successful summer.

## Resolving Conflict.

Sometimes, you will need to act as a mediator between two campers. When resolving conflict, try to remember:

- it is generally counterproductive to bring into conversation old or other conflicts between the parties.
- use "I statements" as much as possible, and encourage the campers to do the same. "You statements" are often accusatory and prompt defensiveness.
- Inject humor if needed to lighten the mood.
- Resolving conflicts is not about picking winners and losers. The resolution should contain something for each party.
- Forcing a camper to say "I'm sorry" is not always productive. You may though be able to teach a camper empathy by having him check on the other individual to see if he is okay.



*By the way, many of these steps also work when resolving conflicts with adults too.*

## 1, 2, 3 Magic

Many Hanover County elementary school teachers use the 1,2,3 Magic Behavior Management program by Thomas Phelan in their classrooms. This can be effective tool, if you are familiar with this program.

# What to do when children don't follow the rules



## STEP 1: Stay calm.

First and foremost, it is important to **stay calm**. If you don't think you can do that, then you may have to take a time-out yourself so that you can come up with a calm, productive approach. If you let your anger get the best of you, it is very likely that the campers will lose their respect for you. Once that happens, it can be incredibly difficult to re-build a positive and appropriate reputation with the campers.

## STEP 2: Listen.

Another important step is to **listen** to the campers. It is very important to first understand the situation and then be understood. Give the camper the opportunity to explain what he/she did (or didn't do). Sometimes things are not as they appear.

## STEP 3: Clearly Communicate appropriate Consequence.

If a child did break a rule, then the next step is to give an appropriate **consequence**.

Consequences that have been decided and agreed upon ahead of time (i.e. in the event of *that*, *this* will happen) are typically the most effective and appropriate.

Teaching a child may also be a step. While we may be tempted to quickly blame a child for a behavior, we may need to coach the child on what is really the best behavior.



Using the **Guidelines for Discipline** listed in the **Parent Information Packet** is a great place to start when determining what is an appropriate consequence.

When working with crowd/group behavior, it is typically more effective to give the group an **incentive** to follow directions rather than give some type of group punishment. For example: "If everyone cleans up lunch within 5 minutes, we will play an extra game of dodgeball at 4pm" is often better than "If everyone doesn't clean up within 5 minutes, we are going to take away this afternoon's dodgeball."



## Disciplinary Notices

No child is perfect. Some children will still misbehave - even if the staff are using great leadership including things such as the tips and guidelines suggested in the general Staff-Volunteer manual.

So... what to do if a child *continues* to misbehave?

If a camper continues to misbehave, it will become necessary to follow some of the steps outlined below.

A camper may need to be written up in a **Disciplinary Notice**. To determine if a discipline report is needed please refer to the "*Guidelines for Discipline*" that are included in the Parent Information Packet.

The more you and your staff can become familiar with these guidelines the easier it will be to determine if a Disciplinary Notice is necessary.

A disciplinary notice may be completed by a Rec Aide, TR Aide or Supervisor.

When writing a Disciplinary Notice...

- work with your site **supervisor** by involving them in the process
- be **factual**, not emotional or judgmental, in your description of the situation
- be **precise**, describing anything that may have triggered the behavior, as well as the observed behavior and consequence
- do not use or refer to other campers by name in disciplinary notice
- **avoid** using words like "always" and "never" when describing camper behavior

If the behavior is a severe safety issue such as injuring a fellow camper, it is important to call Parks & Rec and the parents soon after you have the facts straight. The child may likely need to be sent home.



## Why are these children acting this way?

There are many reasons why a child may not follow your directions. These are just some of the possible reasons:

- for attention
- to see if **you** are paying attention  
(Sometimes you have to run away just to see who runs after you)
- the child may be bored (and acting up may be more fun)
- the child may be tired/sick
- the child may not have understood the directions
- the staff member leading the activity may have given poor instructions

## Plan ahead to prevent bad behavior.

Think about the physical set-up of your next activity. If you are bringing in a group of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to the gym and there are a bunch of balls already out on the gym floor, it will likely be a challenge to keep the kids from grabbing these balls as they come in the door. A better solution may be to keep the balls out of reach until you are ready for them to use them.

## Keep trying.

No single strategy works for every behavior problem and no single strategy works all the time, so keep trying. You may need to come up some creative solutions to help children learn and exhibit appropriate behavior.



### Bully Box

Tools such as a Bully Box or Chill Out Chair can be good options to have on hand to give children options to share or express their feelings more easily.



# Including Children with Special Needs

At all of the sites this summer, there will likely be children with special needs. This may include children with attention deficit disorder (ADD), learning disabilities, emotional disorders, intellectual disabilities, autism, social skill deficits and more.

Working with children with special needs can be both challenging and very rewarding.

If you haven't had many opportunities to interact with children with special needs, you may be uncomfortable or unsure of what to do.



Here are some basic guidelines:

**Relax.** Getting to know someone new or different from you takes time. Simply interact with the child with special needs in a similar manner to how you interact with children without special needs.

**Use everyday, but respectful language.** Don't worry, for example, if you say to a child with a vision impairment, "I see what you mean" or "Let's see...what are we going to do today." These phrases are normal, accepted phrases that campers with special needs use as well.

When referring to someone with special needs, there are some words or terminology that are more accepted and respectful. It is best to use "people first" language when referring to someone with a disability. This refers to putting the person first ahead of their disability. For example:

Try saying "the child with autism" instead of "the autistic child." A "child who uses a wheelchair" is better than "a wheelchair bound child."

There are of course some words that should be avoided at all costs. Words such as "retarded" or "crippled" are considered derogatory and disrespectful terms.

**Talk directly to the child.** When talking with a child with special needs be sure to talk directly to them and not "around them" to their parent or TR Aide. If the child is unable to speak, the TR Aide may verbalize the child's answer, but it is still most respectful to talk to the child.

Also, if you have difficulty understanding what a child said, ask the child to repeat or use a different word. Pretending that you heard what the child said by simply smiling and nodding can be dangerous. Chances are good that the camper knows that you did not understand them too.

**Activity Adaptation.** Adapting activities sometimes may make children with special needs more successful. Activity adaptations may include using over-sized equipment including larger paintbrushes, over-sized crayons or using a beachball instead of a volleyball.

**Other Tips** that can be helpful to some children with special needs:

- Give child additional time to transition from activity.
- When giving directions, allow child time to process the information.
- If the child has the help of a TR Aide, ask the TR Aide away from other campers for any additional suggestions or tips.
- Some children may also have light sensitivity issues, so you may want to re-adjust the lighting.
- Provide child with pictorial, color-coded or visual schedule so he/she can know what is coming up next.
- Keep open lines of communication with parent/supervisor of concerns.
- Watch for “triggers.” For example if you know a particular child has trouble when balloons pop loudly, either prepare child for this or provide a reasonable accommodation to participate in different activity.



## Watch for signs of bullying.

Bullying is often a **power imbalance** between children. It can be difficult to spot as most bullying occurs when we are not looking.

Bullies are often **clever, popular and charismatic** individuals. Don't be surprised if a bully was one of the leaders in your group of children.

Remember when bullying occurs, it is important to work separately with the bully as well as the target. The bully of course needs to learn improved social interactions and empathy. The target may also need to work on not showing the bully a reaction to their teasing.

While anti-bullying programs have been more prevalent in the past decade, bullying still continues to exist in all age groups. Some studies show that kids today have more respect for bullies.

During "free play" activities, it is important for staff to still be involved with children, as this is a prime time for a bully to do some "**covert bullying.**" Please don't just sit on the side lines and chat with your fellow staff members during this important part of the day.

Don't be passive and ignore bullying behavior when you see it. If you don't enforce your site's rules and expectations, then bullying can become an accepted part of your site's culture.

Even children who were not involved in a bullying incident will be watching to see what corrective actions the staff members take.

Please know that you may never get the "full story" of what happened, so be careful before you make snap judgements.

Keep you supervisor informed. Your supervisor may need to have a conversation with a child's parent if bullying becomes an issue.

Encourage your campers to report any signs of bullying behavior.



## Quiet Room

Most sites will have one area designated as a "Quiet Room." This room is primarily designed for children who have the help of a TR Aide. The purpose of this room is to allow a short respite or "escape" for a child who has trouble interacting with a large group of children for extended periods of time. The child can participate in more mellow types of activities such as reading, puzzles, drawing, etc. for short periods of time while in the quiet room.

## Talking with Parents.

Ideally most communication about camp policies and programs should include your site supervisor, HOWEVER, all staff and volunteers should make parents feel welcomed and acknowledged by greeting them, smiling at them and engaging in general polite conversation with them.

Typically the more parents feel welcomed, the better they feel about the camp program.

## "I don't know."

When talking with parents, school officials or even the campers, please refrain from giving the short answer "I don't know" to them. It is of course okay that you don't know all the answers, but a better answer is "I don't know, but let me see if I can find out the answer." Simply leaving the answer as "I don't know" may make people think you don't care about their concern.

Also, in a related area, please be sure that you are giving accurate information. If you are not sure that your answer is correct, please check with your site supervisor to be sure you are giving the proper answer.





# Keeping Everyone Informed

There is a lot of information that needs to be communicated with the campers, their parents as well as reminders for all staff.

## Signs to Post

Your site has a lot of information that you want campers, parents, fellow staff members and school employees to know. Signs are one way to help communicate that information. Establishing one main bulletin board area will also help parents know where to look for information.

### **Reminders.**

Some rules or policies may be issues at your site. Posting reminders can help educate.



### **Guest information.**

Summer Sneakers campers are permitted to bring a guest to camp. Be sure that a sign is posted that gives parents the steps of how a child may bring a guest to camp. Please note that no guests are permitted at MEGA Middle or Discover Camps or at any Summer Sneakers site that is full.

**Calendars:** Posting a calendar of the scheduled activities (such as an art calendar for each day's art program in the craft

room) is another great way to keep everyone informed. A schedule placed in each room makes it convenient for all to refer to and be on the same page. Parents will also often want to take a picture of the full summer calendar which can include reminders about what to bring/wear for field trips, etc.



# Activity Planning

As a staff member you will be needed to design and plan fun and interactive activities for the campers.

## Plan ahead.

During the week of staff training, you'll have a chance to meet with your fellow site staff members and plan your **activity calendars**. This may include theme days, sports activities, as well as craft activities. The more you can get accomplished during this period, the better. Typically after the kids arrive, you'll have little time to plan.

## Try creative twists.

Keep activities fresh by trying creative twists to familiar games. Changing the rules of a game, the equipment or the setting can keep camp from getting repetitive and boring.

## Have back-up activities ready.

Your schedule may need to change at a moment's notice. Think of games or crafts that you can quickly lead and have them on "reserve" for those days when you need a back-up activity.

## Be careful with competition.

Creating an environment where everybody wins every time is probably not realistic (The kids are likely keeping score of who *really* won anyway), but be creative in the way you structure games (consider for example in Dodgeball when someone gets out have them join the other team).

Also, occasionally some staff need to be reminded to not get too competitive themselves with the kids. For example, being overly aggressive and pulling out all your best moves when playing a game of basketball with an 11 year old only makes you look childish and self-centered.



# Daily Schedule

During the week of staff training, you and your co-workers will work on putting together a typical day activity schedule.

On the next page are just sample schedules that people have used in the past.

Things you will likely want to take into consideration when creating your schedule:

**ages of campers** (elementary age campers may do better with shorter sessions as they have shorter attention spans)

**school facilities** (how many classrooms/activity areas does your school allow the summer program to use)

**how many groups will you divide your camp into?**

(some programs may divide camp into 5 groups based on grades, others may need to divide their camp into just 3-4 groups due to staffing or facility limitations)



Sample Schedule for 4 groups with 4 program areas/locations

	Group A: Wiggle Worms	Group B: Wanna Beez	Group C: Wild Ones	Group D: Been There-Done Thatz
8-9am	Campers arrive, parent sign in; drop off lunch			
9am	Free Choice of activities: staff-led games/free play activities in gym or outside			
	Morning Announcements			
9:15-9:45am	Arts & Crafts	Gym	Game Room	Activity Room
9:45-10:15am	Gym	Game Room	Activity Room	Arts & Crafts
10:15-10:30am	Morning Snack			
10:30-11:15am	Game Room	Activity Room	Arts & Crafts	Gym
11:15am-12noon	Activity Room	Arts & Crafts	Gym	Game Room
12noon	Lunch & Afternoon Announcements			
12:30pm-1pm	Quiet Time Activity (all camp or by group activities such as reading, passive games, etc.)			
1-1:45pm	Arts & Crafts	Gym	Game Room	Activity Room
1:45-2:30pm	Gym	Game Room	Activity Room	Arts & Crafts
2:30-2:45pm	Afternoon Snack			
2:45-3:30pm	Game Room	Activity Room	Arts & Crafts	Gym
3:30-4:15pm	Activity Room	Arts & Crafts	Gym	Game Room
4:15-4:30pm	End of Day free choice of selected activities; parents arrive; parents sign out; pick up lunch box, etc.			

Sample Schedule for 5 groups with only 4 program areas

	Group A: Leopards	Group B: Cheetahs	Group C: Tigers	Group D: Lions	Group E: Cougars
8-9am	Campers arrive, parent sign in; drop off lunch				
9am	Free Choice of activities: staff-led games/free play activities in gym or outside				
	Morning Announcements				
9:15-9:45am	Arts & Crafts	Game Room	Activity Room	Gym	Gym (Outside)
9:45-10:15am	Gym (Outside)	Gym	Game Room	Arts & Crafts	Activity Room
10:15-10:30am	Morning Snack				
10:30-11:15am	Game Room	Activity Room	Ball	Gym (Outside)	Arts & Crafts
11:15am-12noon	Activity Room	Gym (Outside)	Arts & Crafts	Game Room	Gym
12-12:30pm	Lunch				
12:30-1:15pm	Gym	Arts & Crafts	Gym (Outside)	Activity Room	Game Room

Sample Schedule for 4 groups with only 3 program areas/locations

At some sites, you may need to divide up your campers into more groups than you have locations. Typically if you do that you will need to send 2 groups to the gym at the same.

	Group A: Wiggle Worms	Group B: Wanna Bees	Group C: Wild Ones	Group D: Been There-Done Thatz
8-9am	Campers arrive, parent sign in; drop off lunch			
9am	Free Choice of activities: staff-led games/free play activities in gym or outside			
	Morning Announcements			
9:15-9:45am	Arts & Crafts	Game Room	Gym	Gym (or outside)
9:45-10:15am	Gym	Gym (or outside)	Game Room	Arts & Crafts
10:15-10:30am	Morning Snack			
10:30-11:15am	Game Room	Arts & Crafts	Gym (or outside)	Gym
11:15am-12noon	Gym (or outside)	Gym	Arts & Crafts	Game Room
12noon	Lunch			
12:30pm-1pm	Quiet Time Activity (all camp or by group activities such as reading, passive games, etc.)			
1-1:45pm	Arts & Crafts	Game Room	Gym	Gym (or outside)
1:45-2:30pm	Gym	Gym (or outside)	Game Room	Arts & Crafts
2:30-2:45pm	Afternoon Snack			
2:45-3:30pm	Game Room	Arts & Crafts	Gym (or outside)	Gym
3:30-4:15pm	Gym (or outside)	Gym	Arts & Crafts	Game Room
4:15-4:30pm	End of Day free choice of selected activities; parents arrive; parents sign out; pick up lunch box, etc.			

## Limit supplies.

When having free time or unstructured periods in the gym, limit the number of balls or sports equipment that campers can use. Too many balls can lead to injuries and chaos. Also it is not a bad idea to have a **“no kicking of balls”** rule in the gym unless it is during a structured game.

## Stay focused.

Sometimes staff at the end of the day can get too relaxed in supervising campers. Of course you will be tired after a long day but your campers still need supervision and leadership. Also at the end of the day is often the only time that the parents see you in action.





## **Make Samples.**

During the week of staff training, you and your fellow staff members may want to put together a sample of each of the art projects that you plan on leading/offering over the course of the summer. Doing this during the training week will help you become familiar with the supplies as well as the difficulty of various projects.

## **Cover Tables in Craft Room.**

To help save the tables, please be sure to cover the tables that you use in the craft room. Most sites are not given the standard school arts & crafts for craft activities, so be sure to protect the tables in that room with some type of table covering (plastic coated, preferred). Some sites cover the table with plastic table covering first and then put roll paper on top.

## **Dead Marker Bucket**

In the craft room, you'll find that kids (and a few adults) may often pick up a marker and find that it doesn't work. Instead of throwing it out, they may just put it back in the pile. Having a designated bucket at the table for dried up markers may encourage people to throw them away when they are used up.



## **Keep the craft room organized.**

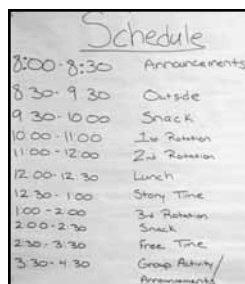
The arts & crafts rooms can be filled with a lot of materials. The better you can keep this room organized, the more successful your summer will be.



## Keep A Consistent Schedule.

Most people are more comfortable and at ease if they know what to expect. Following a general schedule each day helps “train” children, creating less anxiety.

Having a consistent schedule will also help children transition easier from one activity to the next if they know what is coming.



Schedule	
8:00-8:30	Announcements
8:30-9:30	Outside
9:30-10:00	Snack
10:00-11:00	1st Rotation
11:00-12:00	2nd Rotation
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:00	Story Time
1:00-2:00	3rd Rotation
2:00-2:30	Snack
2:30-3:30	Free Time
3:30-4:30	Group Activity/ Announcements

## Allow some time for free play...

In a world where children's lives are often over-scheduled and they are provided entertainment instead of creating it (think of the hand-held games and multiple DVD players in minivans these days), camp is one safe place where children can learn to explore and create their own fun. The ability to overcome boredom in appropriate ways is a great life skill to learn.

## ...but remember that free play can be structured.

“Okay, kids. We’ve got 15 minutes before lunch. Everyone go play in the gym!” It is best to avoid the “free-for-all” approach to an unscheduled time block.

Some better options may be to say “We’ve got 15 minutes before lunch. We’ll go to the gym and you can have your choice of Knockout, jump rope or volleyball.”



## Keep game pieces.

A helpful way to prevent game pieces from getting lost is to keep them in ziploc bags inside the game boxes.

## Craft pick-up

Have a designated spot (near check-out area if possible) for campers and parents to pick up craft projects.



## **Avoid the “Counselor Clump”**

### **Make the most of your staff.**

There may be times in a day when you and your fellow staff members will need to get together to share ideas. When possible try to do these staff only sessions during your morning staff meetings before the campers arrive. Grouping the staff together (such as in this photo below) should be kept to a minimum to help provide proper supervision and interaction with the campers.



Also, be sure to spread your staff out at lunch time too. Children are often less likely to get into trouble if they know that a responsible adult is nearby.

### **Lining up at the end of your activity period.**

At the end of your activity, don't allow your campers to run to the door to line up. Call them up in a particular order. For example, start with “Everyone wearing blue walk to get in line. Everyone wearing red, walk to get in line.” Calling children up in an orderly fashion will often help prevent running, pushing and shoving to be the first in line.

## **Color Wars/Camp Olympics**

At many sites, camps may choose to have a week long set of competitions and events between various groups of kids. Often the camps will divide the groups evenly amongst the various age groups (i.e. have a group called the “Red Team” with 5 kids from each of the grades). This can be a great way to keep the group dynamics “fresh” toward the end of camp.

Camp enthusiasm and energy can often be increased by adding the slightly competitive element.

Of course, please also remember some kids will take these competitions very seriously and very personally if they don't win or they feel the staff are not paying extra close attention to the scoring.

## **Post list of possible activities.**

Have a place for campers and staff to add their ideas of activities they would like to do as well as a resource list of things to do when there is “down-time.”

# Sports and Games Ideas

If you were to ask the campers what activity they would like to do, chances are good that they would reply back with a very loud “DODGEBALL!” Dodgeball is a fun activity, but can easily be over-scheduled. There are many other fun activities to do in the gym. Your site will be given a games notebook and activity cards.

Here are just a few ideas:

**Capture the Flag**  
**Rounders**  
**Prisonball**  
**Giant Life-size Foosball**  
**Freeze Tag**  
**Simon Says**  
**Extreme Rock Paper Scissors**  
**Ultimate Frisbee**  
**Kickball**  
**High Scoring Volleyball**  
**Pin Dodge Ball**  
**Olympic Obstacle Course**  
**Handball/Wallball**  
**Four Square**  
**Amoeba Tag**  
**Paparazzi (Triangle Tag)**  
**Crab Soccer**  
**Parachute Games**  
**Elbow Tag**  
**Amoeba Tag (The Blob)**  
**Giants, Wizards & Elves**  
**Everybody's It**



**Sharks & Minnows**  
**Send it back (All on one side)**  
**Streets, Alleys and Lampposts**  
**Fruit Basket**  
**Have You Ever/All My**  
**Neighbors/Train Wreck**  
**Jump the River**  
**Star Wars Dodgeball**  
**Ga-Ga**  
**The Cup Game**



Details on these and other games available at:

[www.playworksusa.org](http://www.playworksusa.org)

[www.ultimatecampresource.com](http://www.ultimatecampresource.com)

[www.campgames.org](http://www.campgames.org)

[www.youtube.com/user/greatgroupgames](http://www.youtube.com/user/greatgroupgames)

# Water Games/Water Day

Water Games are a great way to spend a hot afternoon at camp. Please remember though that it takes a good deal of **planning** as well.

Be sure to remember that Water Day should still be a **camper focused** activity. It can be very tempting to douse another staff member with water, but the more the staff are focused on getting each other wet, the less the children are being properly supervised. Of all the activities that are offered at camp, this is the one that staff most easily lose their focus of job responsibilities.

Some sites may choose to do their Water Day activities as part of a "Park Day" field trip. This can be a great idea, but it does also require a lot of additional work. Getting access to water sources at various parks can be tricky.

When planning Water Day, you'll likely want to consider these issues:

- what areas of the school can you use? where is the water source?
- where and when children will be able to change into swimsuits?
- where will children who are unable to get wet be?



- what structured activities will you lead?
- when will you fill up the water balloons? (trust us - it takes a looong time to fill up water balloons and they usually last just a few moments).
- do you have a location to keep the towels? (plus a way for kids to remember which towel is theirs)
- do you want to schedule the water activities right after your Ice Cream time (when you are likely to be outside anyway)?

Cream time (when you are likely to be outside anyway)?

- will you allow kids to bring in water shooters/squirt guns?

- who is going to clean-up afterwards (yes, you will need to pick all those busted pieces of water balloons).

- will you provide cups or other items for kids to use to toss water?



- will you invite a local fire department to participate?

- how will you ensure that campers have on sunscreen?



- do you have a back-up plan in case it rains?

## Cleaning Tips

Keep your site clean. While the custodians at your site may be able to help to some degree with general housekeeping, ultimately it is your camp staff's responsibility to keep your areas clean and tidy. Setting up a regular **cleaning schedule** seems to work well with most sites.



Get to know the names of your site's custodians. Learning names shows respect.

When throwing out large boxes, break them down or offer to take them to dumpster/recycling outside.

# Tips for Field Trips.

Field trips are great fun and a great change of pace of the typical daily activities. Field trips have included: bowling, skating, going to the Flying Squirrels baseball game, Cobblestones Water Park and more.

## Be organized.

It is often best to assign staff (prior to departure) to be responsible for specific groups of kids.



You may ask all your kids to wear a **specific color shirt** when going to a public place so you can easily tell who belongs with your site.

**Have a plan** of where you want people to go once they get to the location. For example at the bowling alley, you may want to have some kids get their bowling shoes while the others set up their lane's computer screens.

The staff should **spread out** on a field trip. Having one staff member for each set of 2 lanes at the bowling alley for example, is much better than having all

the staff in one lane.

Another hint for bowling is to limit the number of children per lane, when possible. Having 8 children share a lane can make for a lot of waiting.

## Trips are for kids.

While we hope you have a great time on the trips, please keep in mind that they are **designed for the campers - not you**. Your main job is to supervise and lead the children.

It can of course create a positive environment when you participate WITH the campers. Just don't let your involvement in the field trip activities distract from supervising the kids.





\*Campers will be given **identification bracelets** to wear on the field trip. Please be sure that your campers wear them. It can also be helpful to the campers when the staff also wear the ID bracelets.

Be sure to bring plenty of **sunscreen** when on an outdoor field trip - particularly for the trip to Cobblestones Water Park (middle school).

\*It is typically most effective for each staff member to be given a specific roster of kids that they will be responsible for. It is important to do **frequent head counts** when on a field trip. A quick help can be to do a "buddy check system" where each camper is assigned another camper to keep an eye on.

As many field trips may be spread over a large area, it may be helpful to bring your camp's **walkie talkies** with you.

For elementary schools: It can be a great idea to put **shoe size on name tags** for bowling trips or divide your groups by shoe size.

TR Aides should plan to bring any **"quiet room items"** including change of clothes that they might need during the field trip.



\*On short trips (such as to the bowling alley), **we discourage children from bringing spending money at the snack bar.** This is typically because the facilities are not equipped to handle a huge volume of orders in a short period of time.

\*Encourage children to bring **water** for outdoor field trips.

\*For the middle school trips to Cobblestones Water Park, please plan to get there **early** to ensure use of the covered pavilion. There is only ONE covered pavilion and it is not reservable, so if you get there late, it may be taken by other groups.

\*At Ashland Skateland, children are permitted to bring their own skates.

\*Please know that on most field trips, **outside food is not permitted.**

\* A special note about bathrooms in public facilities: Simply sending the children to a restroom with no adult supervision can be dangerous. Please be appropriately vigilant when sending children to the bathroom.

\* To help with head counts, have the campers ride and from the field trip on the same bus (and possibly in the same seat).

Don't forget to pack a little **extra patience** on field trip days, as kids can be easily distracted by all sorts of sights and sounds.

You may want to plan some low-key activities for camp when you return.



# Ice Cream Man



\* The **Ice Cream Man** is a special visitor that comes **once** a session.

\*Campers will not have bring any spending money to camp to purchase ice cream. Each camper will receive one item at no charge (from approved list of items). LITs are also eligible to receive one free item. Middle school campers may purchase additional items. Staff may also purchase items (but please be respectful to the campers by only purchasing items of the same value).

\*You will want to be sure that you are set up **efficiently** for the ice cream man, so that he can serve all the children in a timely manner.

\*As ice cream is often **messy**, be sure that the kids are eating their ice cream in approved location. Outside is typically the best bet, but be sure that you are not leaving trash and melted ice cream on the sidewalks in front of the school.

\*Please be sure to bring a **trash can** out with you when your group goes outside for the Ice Cream Man.

\*It is often helpful to have a box of wipes available at the elementary sites during Ice Cream time.



\*Please continue to spread out your staff amongst the campers even during ice cream time to help ensure proper supervision.



# Special Visitor Programs.

During the course of the summer, “Special Visitors” will come out to camp to do programs. These range from a cooking/food program to exercise programs to drawing and magic programs. Some will hold all-camp programs with all the children; while others will do their activities in smaller groups as part of a day’s rotation of activities.



During these presentations please be sure you remain **alert and involved.**

While the guest visitor is responsible for the content of the session, you are still needed to stay engaged as recreation aide, TR Aide or LIT.

You should plan to continue to supervise the campers, facilitate a successful program and model appropriate behavior. Just as you might with a fellow staff member leading a program, you may need to ask questions to the presenter to help keep the kids interested in the session.

It is often helpful to spread out the staff amongst the campers to help supervise the children.

Special visitors will likely need some help/time to set up their activity area, so this may mean that the campers will not have access to the gym, etc. during this time.

Consider delegating one or two staff members to assist getting the area ready for the special visitor, while the other staff members prepare the campers for the visitor’s arrival.



# **Some Words of Advice from former staff and volunteers...**

*Make sure you stay patient, and try to understand the kid's perspectives.*

*To always present a positive role model. Remember they are always looking up to you, so make them proud.*

*Get plenty of rest the night before and bring plenty of snacks, drinks and food.  
BE FLEXIBLE!*

*I would say having fun as a camp is the most important thing but it is also important to establish authority in the beginning so the kids know that they can have fun with you but they also need to be respectful of you.*

*Make sure you gain the respect of your campers day one. If you set clear expectations then they will follow your rules. The children are great, but if they see that you will allow them to run around crazily, they will do it. Also to just be flexible. You don't always have to stick to the schedule and be ready if there is a change of plans, because something will happen where you have to just come up with something on the spot to keep the children entertained.*

*Be prepared and flexible and consistent!*

*Always look for ways to help out any staff members, keep your ears and eyes open for anything! Avoid counselor clump and gossip.*

*Have lots of energy! Always try to have fun and participate in games but you also have to implement discipline when necessary.*

*Give rewards and have an anonymous suggestion box for staff.*

*Be prepared for all kinds of behaviors from the campers.*

*Make sure that you still have fun. Yes this is a job and it can be stressful sometimes but it is camp and if you are having fun the kids will too! And if the kids go home exhausted because they had so much fun you get really really happy parents who will return again and again to the program.*

*Work hard but have fun.*

*Be open to new ideas either from other counselors or campers too. We had a girl teach us about five or six different games that the other campers loved and we still play. The campers are a great resource to use for ideas.*

*Always work as a team. Never give up.*

*They LOVE to listen to music.*

*Be ready for anything.*



# for camp ideas

# www.pinterest.com



# www.ultimatecampresource.com

